**How to Disagree Assertively**

**The Process**

1. Affirmative Statement
2. Softening Statement
3. Indicate Process
4. State Reasons
5. Disagree
6. Offer a compromise\*

\* The compromise is optional and it is for you to decide whether or not to make a concession.

**DISAGREEMENT PROCESS**

1. **The Affirmative Statement**

This is simply saying ‘YES’. It might sound strange saying this when you are disagreeing. But if you say ‘NO’ the other person immediately goes into argument mode and is less likely to listen. You are using ‘yes’ to prepare them for what you are going to say, not to indicate that you agree with them.

1. **The Softening Statement**

Most people’s views are influenced by their background, experience or profession. You can show that you recognize this within the context of a softening statement. Here are some examples:-

* ‘As a developer I can understand why you take such a position’
* ‘I understand where you’re coming from’
* ‘I can understand why you said that’
* ‘As a manager whose prime responsibility is for outcomes, I can understand your position makes a great deal of sense’

1. **Indicate Process**

This explains to the person the process you will use to outline your position or your reasons for the stance that you have taken. Here are some examples:

* ‘If I may, I would like to say something about that ...’
* ‘Let me give you my reasons’
* ‘Can I tell you how I have arrived at my viewpoint ...?’
* ‘Let me outline briefly my position and the reasons for it ...’

If there is going to be any sensible discussion, the other person has to let you put your case. If they are not prepared to listen then you are wasting your time anyway, and it would be better to terminate the discussion immediately.

1. **State Reasons**

Here you simply give the reasons or justification for your position. This can either be done in a straightforward way, or you can give a balanced view of pros and cons, explaining why you have come down on the side that you have.

1. **Disagree**

Do not apologize or use tentative language here. Use the strongest language that you can, remembering to accompany what you have said with appropriate body language. Here are some examples:

* ‘So I cannot agree with you’
* ‘So I must disagree’
* ‘So I think you are mistaken’

The two letters of the adverb ‘so’ are exceptionally powerful because they make your conclusions ‘so’ logical and natural.

1. **Compromise**

This is optional, but helpful if there is little or no cost to you. However, your compromise should always be conditional on your getting what you want (as discussed in class).

***Practice the above process with these examples:*** *‘I don’t think you should go out tonight’; ‘I want you to work overtime tonight’; ‘‘You can’t have an increase in salary’.*

*---end---*